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according to usage in prescribed portions cannot be so serviceable for readers of Latin at will. The objective is Latin at sight.

In trying to avoid an unprofitable emphasis on grammar and syntax, let us not encourage an equally unprofitable emphasis on isolated vocabulary. "Words when isolated (out of relation)," I said in the preface to my first edition, "have less vitality than when read in their context;" and (p. 81) "the best way to acquire a vocabulary is to read and read and read—record important new and difficult words in individual notebooks—but read and remember." Some words that occur oftenest frequently do not get remembered; the words that occur seldom—that last tenth—often require disproportionate attention. As *memory-tests* whether the words best worth knowing *have been* acquired from *live reading*, these lists seem to me to be of most promising usefulness; but to recommend them for initiatory or exclusive service, and to involve them in admission requirements, is, I fear, to expose them, with their inevitable limitations, to grave abuse.

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A SUGGESTED MODIFICATION OF THE MARKING SYSTEM

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Machinists and manufacturers are never inclined to preserve a machine that has done good work in the past when it is no longer capable of doing anything more than run itself without producing the results for which it was built. The case is quite otherwise with social organizations which are, so to speak, the machines by which society does its work. Every society is at first organized in such a way as more effectually to accomplish certain ends than it has been possible to attain by previous organizations. There is likely however to come a time in the history of such organizations when most of the energy of its members is directed toward keeping the society running in its accustomed way with less and less attention to the accomplishment, by the most economical means, of the ends for which the society was organized. This tendency is especially strong in many old organizations and has often been noted by reformers of churches and schools.

These general thoughts are suggested in a concrete form by the article "Elective Subjects in the High-School Curriculum" by Professor Bagley in the November *School Review*. It is evident from his extensive inquiries,

as well as from previous studies that have been made of the elective system in colleges, that the question of the practical value of the elective system is greatly complicated by an educational device used in all our high schools and colleges. I refer to the giving of marks in all subjects pursued in the high schools, colleges, and universities. I call this a device because it has no necessary relation to the educational process and because it originated when subjects of study were supposed to be uninteresting in themselves and to need to be made artificially interesting. That it is not a necessary factor in the system of education is illustrated by the fact that the most cultured people of ancient times, if not of all time, the Greeks, used no such device in their educational system.

It is not the intention of this article, however, to discuss the general value of marks and degrees in an educational system but to suggest that whatever the value of the system, it should not be held to in cases where it has least value and may do the most harm. We should not allow the marking system to determine our educational policy but educational policy otherwise determined should decide when the marking system may or may not be used with advantage.

It is admitted even by the most strenuous advocates of the marking system that it best serves its purpose when the marks are given with as great care and accuracy as possible. It is also admitted by everyone that tests of the work done may be made much more accurate in some subjects than in others. This fact is strikingly illustrated by the objection of one of the Oxford professors to the introduction of English into the university course on the ground that it would be impossible to mark students in that subject. From the broader view of education this seems like a very foolish remark, but it may be questioned whether it is not wiser than the policy of introducing literature into the curriculum and then attempting to mark each student in that subject just as he is marked in other subjects. Such a policy inevitably results, as is pointed out by Professor Scott in the January *Review*, in his discussion of "What the West Wants in Preparatory English," in emphasis upon the least valuable portions of literature.

It will be admitted that the exact sciences and the dead languages, when pursued either for the purpose of general intellectual discipline or for practical use in various occupations, may be taught successfully and the results of teaching tested with much greater accuracy than is possible in subjects that are taught chiefly for their cultural value, meaning by culture, effects upon the emotions and the will as well as upon the intelligence.

Most persons will at once admit that literature, art, and music should be regarded as cultural subjects, while nearly all would place history in the same class. As to other subjects there would be considerable differences of opinion but a little thought will show that whether they are predominantly cultural or not depends largely upon the aims and methods of the teacher.

It ought not to be difficult to secure unanimity among educators in regarding at least a few subjects as cultural and not well suited to the application of the marking system. If such an agreement can be secured upon a few subjects what objection can be offered to removing them from the influence of the marking system? Let courses of study in high schools and colleges be arranged with the understanding that one or more of those belonging to the cultural group shall be among the required studies for every student, but that no marks shall be given in such subjects, although credit will be given for the time spent on such subjects in granting degrees of all kinds. If this were done the teachers of such subjects would be freed from the burdensome task of testing and grading the work of pupils and be permitted to devote their energies to interesting and teaching their pupils in such a way that development in those lines would not then stop as it now so often does when a diploma is received.

The advocates of the marking system and of higher standards in education ought not to object to this plan because only that portion of education which admits of least thorough and accurate testing and grading is removed from the application of the system. The tendency to apply rigid and exact standards to cultural subjects and loose and ineffective standards to other subjects would be reversed, with advantage to all phases of education.

If such a system were used for a while the time would probably come when some subjects would be taught by one teacher for cultural ends, no marks being given, while the same subjects would be taught for practical or disciplinary ends by other teachers and the pupil's work carefully graded. We should then have in part a practical solution of the problem of the educational value of various subjects, the value being determined more by the aims of the teacher than by the name of the subject. A still more important result would be that teachers would be encouraged to formulate more definite aims in teaching their subjects and to devise the best methods of attaining these ends unhampered by the marking system.